

# Journeys, Cultural Identity, and Contemporary Art

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Bruce-Guadalupe  
Community School



**LATINO**  
Inc.

Peck School **OF THE Arts**

# Overview of Session

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Context: BGCS & ALMA

Contemporary Artist: Raoul Deal

Third and Sixth Grade Units of Study

- Responding
- Connecting
- Creating
- Presenting

Reflections



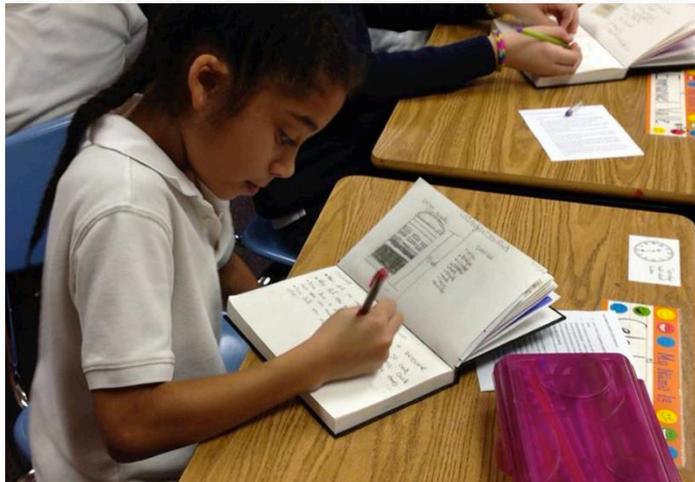
# Context

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Bruce Guadalupe Community School is a K3–8th grade charter school located in the near south side of Milwaukee. 98% of the 1200 students attending BGCS are Hispanic.

These units were originally part of a four-year federal grant called ALMA and funded through a federal *Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant*.

ALMA continues to exist as an approach to units of study organized with Big Ideas, deepening students' cultural knowledge and strengthening their dispositions as learners.



# Context

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Work with visiting artists through ALMA has provided students with important first hand experiences blending knowledge of artists' backgrounds, planning and research processes, and pursuit of Big Ideas along with opportunities to interpret and respond to culturally relevant artworks.

Collaboration among ALMA teachers and visiting artists has been essential in taking a postmodern, multicultural approach. Learning through multiple ways of knowing creates spaces to honor students' individual stories.



# Context



Four main facets that we've learned others working with community-based artists might seek to include in their experiences as well:

- community cultural development
- team curriculum planning
- collaborative implementation
- involving community



**Journeys and Cultural Identity**  
Prints by Bruce-Guadalupe Community School students

The following experience was especially successful because it was:

- transformative for the artist and participants
- courageous
- sustainable

# Raoul Deal





*Left: Ni de Aqui Ni de Alla  
Right: Immigrant Shopkeeper*



*Above: Dream Act*

# Responding



*Above: students discuss pieces in Ni de Aqui Ni de Alla in Latino Arts Gallery. Deal explained the stories he learned through interviews with community members depicted in the prints and explained the corresponding poems on display, written by Ximena Sosa.*

# Connecting: Cultural Identity

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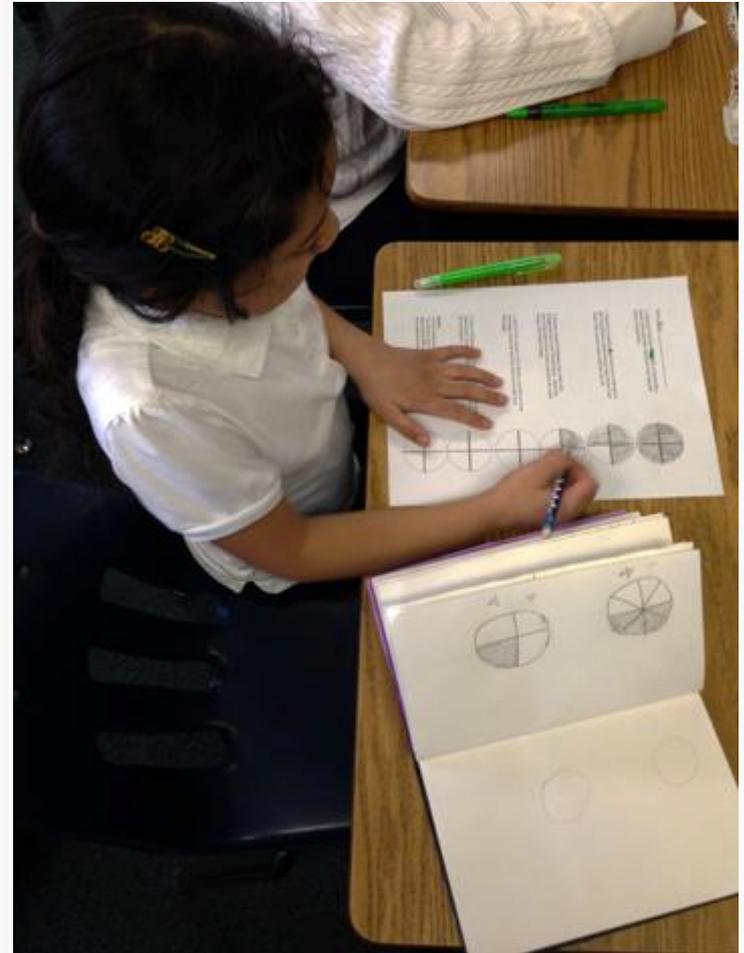
## 3rd Grade

**Language Arts:** We discuss immigration as a part of cultural identity. Students read Ten Days to America, a story about immigrating to America, and a letter from Raoul Deal, which included details about his family's immigration story. They then brainstormed questions to ask a family member about immigration in an interview, such as:

- What transportation did you use?
- What was difficult about immigrating?
- What/who did you leave behind?
- Why did you immigrate?

Students then used information from their interview to write a diamante poem.

**Math:** Students learned how to visualize data from their interviews using graphs and pie charts.



# Connecting: Journeys

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## 6th Grade

**Language Arts:** Students used the book Where The Red Fern Grows to inspire a discussion on a journey they took or that their family has taken. Once a person who lead the journey was established, the students brought in a photo of him or her to work from in art class.

**Math:** Students learned how to use *scale* to accurately enlarge a photo.

# Creating: 3rd grade



Dayanara



**Art:** Working with the Big Idea of cultural identity, simultaneously developed two artworks. The first, after studying Frida Kahlo's self-portraits as an example of representing cultural identity, included a background with parts of their families immigration stories. The second, in collaboration with visiting artist Raoul Deal, was a relief print based on a photograph of the person they interviewed. Similar to the works in Deal's exhibit, students' prints were ultimately displayed with their poems.

# Creating: 3rd grade



# Creating: 6th grade

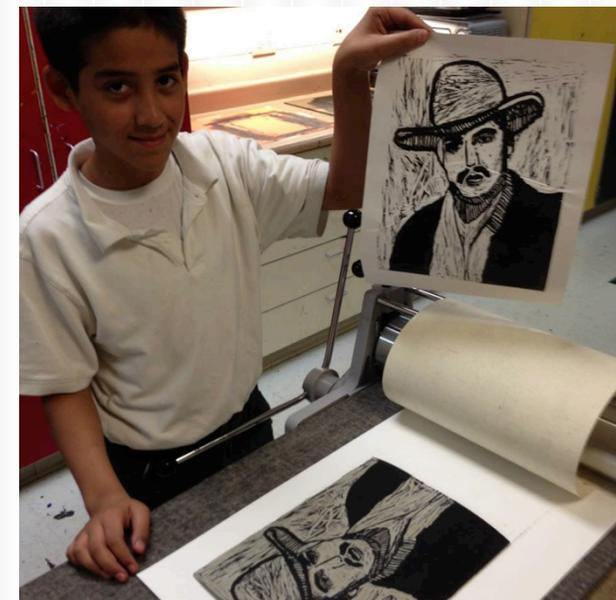
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**Art:** As a scaffolding activity students explored and illustrated ideas about family and journey by discussing and reflecting on what motivated birds to travel. Through classroom discussion students compare similarities between migratory birds and what motivates people to undertake long journeys, often in the face of great personal risk.

# Creating: 6th grade

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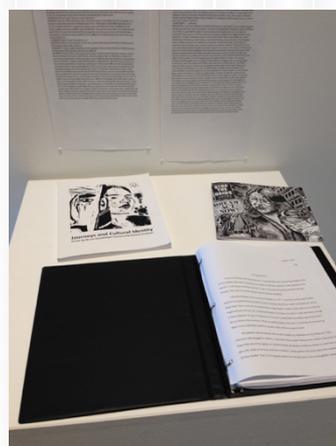
**Art:** After discussing the works in Ni de Aqui Ni de Alla with visiting artist Raoul Deal, students used the photographs of the people identified in the language arts portion of this unit to transfer an enlarged image to their linoleum block, carved their relief printing plates, and printed on a flatbed press. Similar to how Deal emphasized the stories learned through his community interviews, students shared the journey stories that they learned through their interviews as they created their work.



# Presenting: 3rd Grade



# Presenting: 6th grade



# Presenting: 6th grade



“My grandfather, Pedro, was looking to fulfill his dreams of progress. Pedro was twenty-three years old when he traveled to the United States in search of opportunities, it was one of the most important things he ever did... Many people who are undocumented are hard working people that just want a new start, they get sent back and a lot of people haven't done anything wrong.”



“When you come here you think everything is going to be better, and it is, but it takes a lot of strength and courage. Everything that I did was harder than what I thought it would be, but I did everything for a better life.”

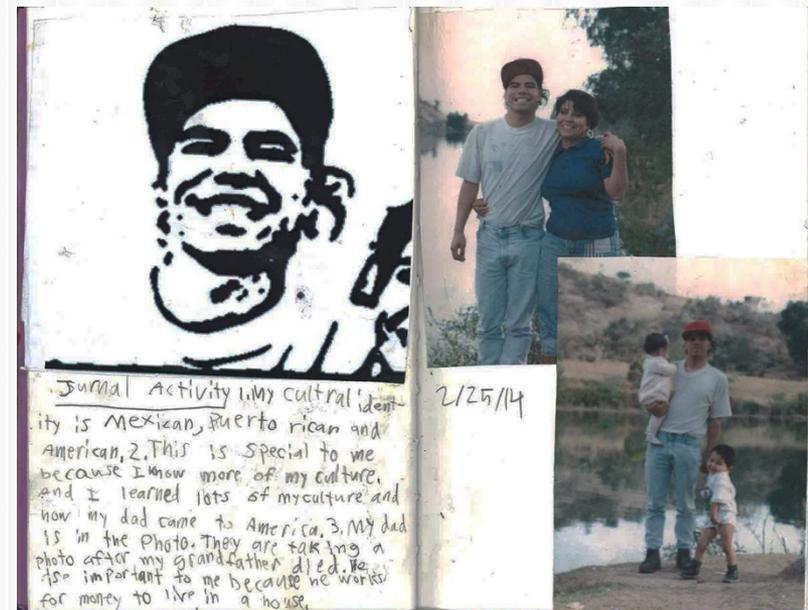
# Reflections: Student use of Studio Habits

**Envision:** *How an artist uses their imagination and creativity to think about all steps in a project from planning to completion.*

Students started this project with the end in mind, they had to imagine the process they needed to take to get to the completion of the project. It started with the selective choice of which photograph to use, then moved to which portion of the photo would expand the best while still focusing on how their project would convey the message they were telling.

**Engage and Persist:** *How an artist problems solves and pushes through challenges.*

Students were problem solving for the duration of this project, they were introduced to the concept of a scale factor and using a scale factor to expand a portion of their photograph, this was really hard for them, but they knew if they stayed engaged in the process and persisted through their challenges that would end up with the final product they had envisioned.



# Reflections: Implementation

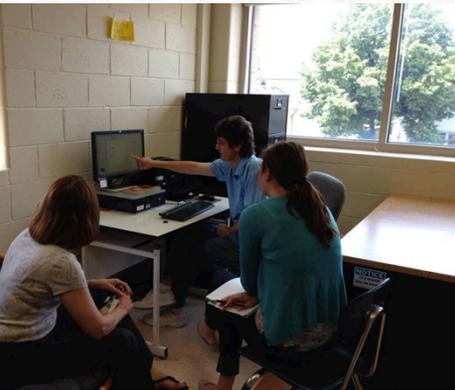
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**-Buy in:** While work with a visiting artist is a natural fit for art teachers, it was necessary to address important questions and concerns from collaborating language arts and math teachers, such as “What timeframe do we have?” and “How does this fit into our classroom curriculums?”

**-Common Planning Time:** Common planning time was very important in preparing to deal with challenging content posed by Deal’s work. The first time we tried this, grade level teams met over the summer during a week long institute to plan how we would approach this topic with students. This also gave us time to develop parallel curriculum plans. The challenge was then finding time to meet during the school year to review and adjust our plans.

**-Concerns with scheduling:** Coordinating our school schedules with the visiting artist’s schedule was somewhat challenging, but worth it.

**-Concerns with content:** immigration can be a sensitive topic, especially among a population with undocumented family members. Ultimately, we framed this in terms of Cultural Identity for 3rd grade and Journeys for 6th. In middle school, some students were challenged to identify a transformative journey that they had experienced.



# Thank you



Please view other examples of our curriculum at:

<https://naea.digication.com/alma>